

Shalom Pastor,

I enjoyed the chance to speak with you about such an important matter the other night. Since to me the crux of our discussion about women teaching and having authority comes down to the meaning of the language, I have reviewed the language in question. However, I stand unconvinced that there is any compelling reason to change the translation. For that reason I will certainly stand with what has been the traditional teaching.

Firstly, before even examining the meaning of “to have authority over” in Greek, we can examine the flow of logic in the passage and see if the alternates make any sense. I believe I pointed this out to you on the phone. The claim that the words should read to “usurp authority” (as only the KJV puts it) or to “domineer” simply fails.

These two things are ethical norms among believers, and are not unique to women at all. Thus, the passage falls apart. In fact, if you want to amuse yourself, you can just insert ethical norms where the text reads “have authority over a man” and see how strangely the passage reads. The first part with the ethical norm will seem superfluous and even irrelevant. The following part about man being created first and women being deceived will seem comical!

Finally, an insertion of something like usurp or domineer makes the prohibition on teaching and the prohibition on “domineering” obviously clash. We would have to believe that women were holding authority positions (so long as they didn’t domineer too much 😊 ) but were simultaneously prohibited from teaching the men who were under their authority. Does that sound like a natural reading to you?

Looking at your claim in Greek, I can see that “authenteo” has the primary meaning of to have authority over someone. In certain usages it can also mean to domineer. I can see nothing wrong with using the primary meaning of a word in a way that fits the passage, nor do I see a compelling reason to change it to a possible alternate meaning, which itself hacks up the logical flow of the verses. If there is any more convincing argument to change the translation, please let me know. Otherwise, I see no reason to change from the common meaning of “authenteo” nor to change the traditional doctrine which we have from the beginning.

However, I would like to continue and question as to whether you may in fact be mistaken. I realize you have studied many years and have led a flock for many years, but that does not preclude the possibility

of being mistaken. In fact, I would add that a willingness to essentially erase a prohibition based on the kind of arguments applied to 1 Timothy is itself a mistake.

Could the common translation be correct, Pastor? Could the ordinary reader be correct? If so, then the Body of Messiah must get back on the rails and follow the ordinances that God gave to it. They are the only instructions regarding that order which we have.

I might also point out that you recognize along with myself and others that the body of Messiah is often over-feminized and that this is a problem. Yet this over-feminization didn't happen in a vacuum and it isn't continued in a vacuum. It came about by some observable methods, and one of those methods was allowing women to take away the jobs of men. I say we can do something about the problem of over-feminization. One of those things is to give men back the jobs that God gave them.

I would also challenge you that if you consider some of the arguments against the ordinary reading of 1 Timothy to be arguments worthy of overturning a plain prohibition, then you may be closer to [OTHER GROUP]'s belief in "continuing revelation" than you think you are. I mean if we can make a plainly-stated prohibition about an important matter just disappear with arguments like that, we can make a lot of other things disappear as well. Pulling something from one domain and applying it to a radically different one? Drawing rules from potential and unproven exceptions? Ignoring the powerful support of every single example of NT congregational teaching? I don't just see an important rule erased, Pastor. I see a large hole being punched in doctrinal understanding and I hope I'm not the only one alarmed. I wish you would ask yourself if you typically go about and make plain statements become irrelevant based on the very same arguments. If you don't do that typically, then why do it here?

Please think about the possibility of reversing your position on this.

Thank you for all that you do. God bless.

Tom

